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PRESS RELEASE

USAID and Microsoft Award Innovative Teachers

For the first time in Macedonia, a Microsoft Innovative Educators' Forum was held on December 10th to honor teachers who have exhibited the most innovative use of technology in the classroom. Organized by the USAID Primary Education Project and Microsoft Partners in Learning, the Forum included an awards ceremony for winners of a national competition in three categories: innovation in project content; innovation in collaboration between students and teachers inside and outside the school; and creativity and innovation in using technology in the classroom.

"We have seen wonderful examples of projects that merge technology and innovation with the teaching process. They provide students with an opportunity to develop their critical thinking, teamwork and problem-solving skills. These skills will enhance the students' capacity to find productive employment and succeed in a knowledge-based global economy," said Alexander Woods, USAID Education Office Director.

This nation-wide forum is part of a series of Microsoft Innovative Educators' Forums held worldwide to promote a global professional development community where teachers can collaborate with colleagues from over 100 countries, access quality content developed by their peers, and challenge themselves to take their use of technology to the next level.

The competition winners will be invited to represent Macedonia in the European Innovative Educators' Forum in Berlin in March 2010, with Microsoft financing their costs. The European Forum winners will go on to compete in the Worldwide Forum.

The USAID Primary Education Project (PEP) promotes the innovative use of technology, such as computer control, robotics, electronic music, and video. PEP established a public-private partnership with Microsoft Partners in Learning to showcase teachers who creatively incorporate into their teaching the skills needed for 21st century learning.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

PEP also works to improve the quality of math and science education, improve school based assessment, renovate schools and increase workforce skills. The American people, through USAID, have invested nearly \$500 million in Macedonia since 1993 to create jobs, reduce corruption, and prepare Macedonian students for the workforce. USAID provides economic and humanitarian assistance in more than 100 countries. For more information please visit <http://macedonia.usaid.gov>.

Microsoft Partners in Learning is a global initiative designed to actively increase access to technology and improve its use in learning. The goal of the initiative is to help schools gain better access to technology, foster innovative approaches to pedagogy and teacher professional development and provide education leaders with the tools to envision, implement and manage change. At the beginning of 2009, Macedonia, Albania and Kosovo joined the global Microsoft Partners in Learning program.